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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

# **UTILITY APPLICATION**

**OF**

**SUEN CHING YAN**

**FOR**

**UNITED STATES PATENT**

**ON**

**CAP WITH IMPROVED SUNSHADE**

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# **CAP WITH IMPROVED SUNSHADE**

## **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

### **Cross-References to Related Applications**

This patent application is a continuation-in-part application of Application Serial No. 10/349,255 filed January 21, 2003 and entitled: CAP AND BACK SUNSHADE, which application is incorporated herein by this reference thereto.

### **Field of the Invention**

5 This invention relates to caps for wearing outdoors, and in particular, to caps having a shade for shading a portion of the user from the sun.

### **Description of the Related Art**

The prior art includes a number of cap and shade combinations. U.S. Patent  
10 No. 6,131,201, for example, discloses a cap having an openable top cover for retaining the shade in an inner space. The sunshade in that patent, however, suffers from, among other things, the fact that the shade is attached to the outside surface of the cap, and is thereby awkward to use and fails to provide the additional support that could be provided had the shade instead been attached to the inside of the cap where the band of  
15 the cap tightly fits around the wearer's head. That patent also suffers from the ill placement of the opening from which the sunshade is released. The zipper for the opening is in plain sight, detracting from the aesthetics of the cap.

Also, the opening is far from the attachment features, which means the sunshade must be entirely detached from the cap before placing in the inner space. This increases the chances that the sunshade will be removed by accident and also increases the chances that the sunshade and the cap will be separated and one of the two will be lost.

5 What is needed is a cap and shade combination that may be made of a one-piece construction so the shade is less likely to be separated from the cap and lost. Alternatively, what is needed is a two-piece construction that is much less likely to allow the shade to be accidentally removed, such as where the removable attachments of the shade are on the inside of the cap where the tight fit to the wearer's head can aid  
10 in forcing the two pieces together.

## **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention is a cap and shade combination in which the shade may be folded inside an attached pouch which is permanently attached or detachable when not  
15 in use. The shade comprises a central portion and two wing portions such that it may be unfurled both down away from the cap and laterally in both directions around the rim of the cap. Each wing portion has an upper edge comprising one or more shade attachment members configured and positioned to removably attach to mating attachment members on the inner surface of the cap near the front visor when in use for  
20 maximum coverage of the user's neck, ears, etc.

In one embodiment, the pouch may be stitched into the cap. In another embodiment, it may be removably attached to the inner surface of the crown of the cap, such as by using a hook and loop attachment configuration or using snaps, buttons,

clasps, latches, or other common fasteners. In another embodiment, the pouch may be sewn into or as part of the band or sweatband of the cap. The pouch may further have a zipper or other fastening means for alternatively enclosing and releasing the shade. Where the pouch is sewn into or as part of the band, the opening for the shade may  
5 open to the inside surface, the outside surface, or the bottom edge of the band.

These and other objects and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from a review of the following specification and accompanying drawings.

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

Figure 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 2 is an exploded perspective view of the embodiment shown in Figure 1.

10 Figure 3 is a bottom view of a cap in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 4 is a side view of the backside of a shade in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 5 is a bottom view of an embodiment of the present invention showing a  
15 pouch and cap combination in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 6 is a bottom view of an embodiment of the present invention showing a pouch and cap combination in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention.

20 Figure 7 is an exploded perspective view of another embodiment of the invention.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT(S)**

The detailed description set forth below in connection with the appended drawings is intended as a description of presently preferred embodiments of the invention and is not intended to represent the only forms in which the present invention  
5 may be constructed and/or utilized. The description sets forth the functions and the sequence of steps for constructing and operating the invention in connection with the illustrated embodiments. However, it is to be understood that the same or equivalent functions and sequences may be accomplished by different embodiments that are also  
10 intended to be encompassed within the spirit and scope of the invention.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate one embodiment of the present invention, in which there is a cap **8** comprising a crown **10** that is generally convex in shape to fit over and around a portion of the wearer's head. The crown **10** has an outer surface **11**, an inner surface **12**, and a bottom portion **18**. In this embodiment, there also is a visor **50**  
15 attached to a front portion **16** of the crown **10**, which may be of any standard length and curvature to help shade the wearer's eyes from the sun's rays. In this embodiment, the cap **8** itself appears much like a standard baseball cap when viewed from the outside.

The inner surface **12** of the crown **10**, however, comprises one or more  
20 connecting structures **14** as shown in Figure 3 for securing a pouch **20** to the inner surface **12** of the crown **10** as shown in Figure 5. The connecting structures **14** shown in Figure 3 represent one half of a common hook and loop arrangement, and the mating hook and loop structures **24** are located on the backside of the pouch **20** as shown in

Figure 4. The inner surface **12** of the crown **10** also has two or more shade attachment members **30** for receiving mating attachment members **45** as discussed below.

The pouch **20** may be attached to the inner surface **12** of the crown **10** by a number of other connecting structures. The pouch **20** and crown **10**, for example, may be stitched together. In such an embodiment, the pouch **20** may not be easily removed from the crown **10**. This may be preferable in applications where there is no foreseeable reason to want the pouch **20** to be easily removable from the cap **8** or where easy removal of the pouch **20** from the cap **8** even may be undesirable. In other applications, the pouch **20** may be removably connected to the inner surface **12** of the crown **10** by one or more fastening means, such as buttons, snaps, clasps, latches, or the like, as an alternative to the hook and loop arrangement illustrated in Figures 3 and 4.

The pouch **20** has an opening **28** defined by one or more edges **25**. In one embodiment, a zipper **26** is disposed along edges **25** so that the opening **28** may be closed when desired as shown in Figure 5. Alternatively, one or more other fastening means may be employed along the edges **25** of the pouch **20**, such as one or more buttons, snaps, clasps, latches, hook and loop fasteners, or the like, for closing the opening **28** of the pouch **20**.

Contained within the pouch **20** is a shade or sunshade **40**. One end of the shade **40** is attached to the inner surface of the pouch **20**, and the shade further comprises a central portion **41**, a left side portion **42**, and a right side portion **48** as shown in Figure 2. The left and right side portions each have an upper edge **43** having one or more

mating shade attachment members **45**. Each mating attachment member **45** is configured and positioned to attach to the shade attachment member **30** on the inner surface **12** of the cap **8**. The shade attachment members **30** and mating attachment members **45** shown in Figures 3 and 4, respectively, are made of a common hook and loop configuration, but the present invention contemplates any number of other fastening arrangement that would work equally as well, provided that the fastening means allows for easy unfastening as well by the user. Such is the case with many commercially available fasteners, including for example, buttons, snaps, latches, clasps, and the like.

In a preferred embodiment, the two or more mating attachment members **30** are disposed on the inner surface **12** of the crown **10** of cap **8** near the front of the crown **10**. The inner surface **12** is utilized in this embodiment to reduce the chances that the shade **40** would be inadvertently unfastened while it is unfurled and in use with the cap **8** is on the wearer's head. That is, whereas U.S. Patent No. 6,131,201 may suggest that the shade can be attached to the outer surface of the cap, a preferred embodiment of the present invention uses shade attachment members **30** located on the inner surface **12** of the crown **10**. As a result, the mating attachment members **45** and upper edges **43** of shade **40** are sandwiched between the crown **10** and the wearer's head. This significantly improves that attachment between the shade **40** and the crown **10** when the user is wearing cap **8**.

Additionally, U.S. Patent No. 6,131,201 may suggest that shade attachment members on the crown may be placed on the side of the crown, but the shade

attachment members **30** on the crown **10** in one embodiment of the present invention are instead located in the front portion **16** of crown **10** near the left and right edges **52** and **54**, respectively, of the visor **50**. This frontal placement of the shade attachment members **30** maximizes the surface of the user's head, neck, and shoulders that is shaded from the sun's rays by the shade **40**.

In Figures 3 and 4, the shade attachment members **30** and mating attachment members **45** are illustrated as a hook and loop arrangement, but other fasteners work equally as well, such as buttons, snaps, clasps, latches, and the like. The upper edges **43** of said right and left side portions **42** and **48**, respectively, may also comprise an elastic portion for tightly conforming to a user's head or for further aiding the mating of the shade attachment members and the mating attachment members **30** and **45**.

In another embodiment, shown in Figure 6, a band or sweatband **60** is attached along the bottom edge **18** of crown **10**, and pouch **20'** is sewn or otherwise attached to the band **60**. The pouch **20'** of this embodiment is much like the pouch **20** discussed above, and a preferred embodiment is configured such that the opening **28** of the pouch **20'** opens along the inside surface **62** of band **60**, as shown in Figure 6. Alternatively, pouch **20'** could be configured to open on the outside surface of band **60**, or to open along the bottom edge of band **60**. Also, the pouch **20'** shown in Figure 6 may be integrally formed in the sweatband **60**, but it may alternatively be made as a separate unit sewn onto or removably attached to the sweatband **60**, either on its inside surface, on its outside surface, or along its bottom edge, depending on the needs of the particular application.



Referring to Figure 7 it will be seen that the cap **8** comprises a crown **10** with a visor **50** and is thus far like the cap previously described in being made up of gores **100** which are sewn to each other by lines of stitching **102**.

In this embodiment a pouch not seen is formed by reason of a gore shaped  
5 fabric segment **104** being sewn along the gore lines or stitch lines **102** on the interior of the cap **8** so as to form an interior pouch not seen within which the back shade **106** having what may be considered a dove-tail configuration by reason of the inwardly cut **108** may be received.

It will be noted that the back shade **106** is as previously described with respect  
10 to the attachment numbers on the lateral sides and differs only in that an exterior surface **110** may have a design **112** as shown in dotted line. It will be noted that the back shade **106** is secured to the free edge **112** of member **104** which is sewn along the opposed edges **114** within cap **8** as previously described. By reason of the free edge **112** a pouch is formed by the reason of the fabric segment **104** being slightly larger  
15 than the space between the seam lines **102** of the gores **100** and thus there is formed an enclosure or pouch by reason of co-action of the surface **120** of segment **114** and the interior of the crown **10** of cap **8**.

Ideally, as indicated, the cloth segment **104** forming the pouch is of lightweight material as is the back shade **106**, preferably of silk or the like, so that the back shade  
20 as well as the pouch forming segment **104** may be easily received within the interior of the crown of cap **8**. The provision of the split tail or cut-in **108** of the lower edge **128** of back shade **106** makes for ease of folding so that the entirety of back shade **106** is

easily received within the pouch.

While the present invention has been described with regards to particular embodiments, it is recognized that additional variations of the present invention may be devised without departing from the inventive concept.